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ABSTRACT

Five members of a school library administration class developed guidelines for a Volunteer Mother Program in public school libraries. Guidelines were stated for the following aspects of volunteer programs: (1) reasons for using volunteers; (2) introduction to the program; (3) recruitment; (4) qualifications; (5) amount of help needed; (6) selection; (7) organization; (8) direction of work; (9) potential problems; (10) success in junior and senior high school programs; (11) evaluation; and (12) recommendations for continuation. The appendix includes a library volunteer job description, a sample application blank, and an outline of a manual for volunteers. (EMH)

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Volunteer Mother Program

IR004092

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INTRODUCTION

"Why pay for the Cow ..."

"Why pay for the cow when you can get the milk for nothing" was the traveling salesman's instant reply to the often asked question, "why don't you get married and settle down"? Both librarians and administrators are asking, "why pay for additional librarians or para-professionals when that wonderful milk in the form of the VOLUNTEER is available"?

During the Summer Session of 1971 five members of the School Library Administration class developed a set of guidelines for a Volunteer Mother Program. The cross section of this committee was nearly perfect -- two second grade teachers -- one senior high school librarian -- a middle school librarian -- and an elementary school librarian.

Specific questions posed were: Why a Volunteer Program? On what level is it best suited? Is any method of reward necessary? What is the drop out rate? What method of instruction is best, group or individual? Should the volunteer be a generalist or a specialist?

The guidelines developed answered the majority of these questions. However, some unanswered questions were, liability and legal aspects of a volunteer program -- volunteer mothers as a negotiable item for unions -- use of capable mothers as tutors and subject specialists in satellite resource centers -- possible use of volunteers as substitutes when librarians are ill -- the right of the volunteer to discipline children.

The editors of Library Journal in a recent edition (Oct. 1, 1971, p.1416) fully support the advent of more volunteer programs; "few lovers of books and libraries could afford to contribute $500 a year to keep the library running -- but anyone can give the equivalent in valuable labor by working one four-hour stint a week".

Since the advent of budget squeezes and the Nixon Freeze more librarians and administrators are turning towards the VOLUNTEER as a possible solution to the manpower and money shortage. However, many librarians feel the training and scheduling of volunteers is too time consuming and not worth the effort. Another sore point is if ten volunteers are utilized that presents ten possible personality clashes.

The students of L.S. 582 Summer Session 1971 feel differently. The composition of the class was ten librarians and ten teachers. Their answers to the following questions were significant:

In favor of a Volunteer Program .....Yes 16 No 4

Would use Volunteers on:

Elementary level	Yes 16	No 4
Junior High	Yes 12	No 8
Senior High	Yes 3	No 17

Type of training:

Incidental day to day instruction....	Yes 14	No 6
Formal group instruction	Yes 6	No 14
Combination of both	Yes 14	No 6

Is a manual necessary:

Yes 20 (it is most important)

Armed with a set of guidelines it is easy to determine what librarians expect from volunteers. The following quotes taken from a video tape recording, produced at Villanova University, "Library Mothers Speak Out" echoes the sentiments of the volunteer when asked "What can librarians do, to keep the volunteer happy?"

"Be organized -- know exactly what you want us to do -- when we come to work -- put us to work immediately -- I just don't want to flounder around."

"She shows us her appreciation -- she keeps telling us how glad she is to have us there."

"She goes the extra mile -- she gives us a Christmas party then at the end of the year -- this is from her own funds, I think! -- she gives us all a dinner -- these are little things -- they aren't necessary -- but they are nice."

"We know we are appreciated -- the Mother Superior tells us so!"

The L.S. 582 Summer Class of 71 has successfully probed the problems of a VOLUNTEER LIBRARY PROGRAM, and what is their reward?

"Why not a glass of milk"

Arthur Castellucci
Editor.

PREFACE

PROBLEMS OF A VOLUNTEER MOTHER (FATHER) PROGRAM

A volunteer program has great potential for success in most school libraries. However, there are important and subtle characteristics of this type of assistance which should be considered before undertaking such a program. We have examined the methods and problems of selection used elsewhere in our presentation. There are, of course, many intrinsic problems in selection, ranging from criteria of selection to informing those mothers whom you feel are not capable of providing the quality and quantity of assistance you desire.

We shall list the problems in statement or question form and consider their ramifications. You should first determine if you agree with the statement and, if so, evaluate its significance and probability of occurrence.

1. Untrained help may have a tendency to feel they know more than you. Perhaps this is particularly true of the less educated person. "The more you learn, the more you realize how little you know."

2. This type of staffing may weaken your argument for additional professional or para-professional help.

3. What should you do if a mother is unable to deal with children or assumes too much control?

4. How would you deal with the mother who is unable to determine when to go ahead on her own or consult you.

5. Possible problems for volunteer's children-

   A. Student who informs other classmates that his mother is the librarian
   B. Student who becomes excited and/or assumes he is "special" when his mother is present
   C. Favoritism displayed by volunteer to particular students

6. How would you explain the importance of the volunteers contribution to the total school program?

7. How do you manage the mother who is unable to maintain confidences?

8. What are the unique problems on different levels for volunteer programs? (High school, elementary school, etc.)

9. How do you inform the volunteer that his assistance is no longer required?

10. How much of your time should be devoted to preparing work for the volunteer?

There are many other problems which are not listed above. However, these ten represent the most significant and are closely related to others you may conceive. It is important that you examine the many factors which determine the success of a volunteer program in YOUR situation. These factors vary and include everything from the physical library setting to YOU. Perhaps you have noticed that most volunteer problems are fundamantally human relationship situations. Obviously, this type is often the most difficult to solve and will require substantial attention and understanding.

"Easy to tell a person where to hang his coat, but difficult to tell a person you don't need him anymore."

Submitted by:
Judee Daly: Elementary Teacher
Carole Grundy: Elementary Teacher
Larry Jaffe: Senior High School Librarian
Louise Pasternak: Elementary School Lib.
Ophelia Taylor: Middle Grade Librarian

Submitted to:
Mr. Arthur Castellucci
Assistant Professor
Department of Library Science
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GUIDELINES FOR A VOLUNTEER MOTHER PROGRAM IN LIBRARIES

I. FUNDAMENTAL REASONS FOR USING VOLUNTEER MOTHERS.

A. As a way of maintaining a successful school library program, contributing to the educational, and social development of the students.

1. More efficient library service rendered to pupils and faculty
2. Improves school - library - community relationship
3. Relieves librarian from routine clerical duties
4. Provides work experience and possible recruitment into field
5. Provides opportunity for service.
6. Additional role of media center added to a traditional library setting

B. Has as its secondary aim the individual serving as a medium that brings the library and community into closer contact.

C. Provides the volunteers with a chance to utilize their time in one of the most worthwhile and rewarding areas - service to the needs of their children.

II. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM.

A. Letter prepared by librarian, endorsed by principal.
1. Published in school newspaper for distribution
2. Mimeographed flyer sent home with students

B. Present talk
1. P.T.A. group
2. Mother's club

C. Include these points
1. Job description
2. Attractive and motivating format
3. Ask for interested volunteers

III. RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES.

A. System of selection.

1. Application blank to file
   a. Name
   b. Address and phone number
   c. Children attending school - ages and grades
   d. Education or experience background
   e. Job preferences
   f. Availability - days, hours
   g. Particular skills

IV. QUALIFICATIONS AND DESIRABLE TRAITS.

A. Required qualifications

1. A sincere interest
2. A desire to serve
3. A co-operative attitude

B. Desirable traits.

1. Dependability
2. Enthusiasm
3. Accuracy
4. Neatness
5. Originality
6. Pleasant personality
7. Positive attitude
8. Willingness to serve
9. Sense of enthusiasm
10. Appreciation of children's interest

C. Mental ability and educational background have little bearing on a mother being a good library volunteer.

V. AMOUNT OF VOLUNTEER HELP NEEDED.

A. Dependent on time the librarian has for training and supervision

B. Size and qualifications of the library staff

C. School - Enrollment

D. Size of library quarters

E. Expectations of library program

VI. METHODS OF SELECTING VOLUNTEERS.

A. Mothers may volunteer directly to librarian

B. Mothers may make formal application to librarian

C. Apply to delegated agency

1. Mothers club
2. P.T.A.

VII. TYPICAL ORGANIZATION OF VOLUNTEER MOTHERS.

A. Volunteer Mother's Club.

1. To provide the mothers with an opportunity to work together, giving and receiving helpful ideas and encouragement
2. Membership: Open to any mother interested and available to do the work of a volunteer mother.

3. Activities.

a. Mechanical.
(1) Library duties

(2) Directing volunteer program in aspects to be handled by members:
(a) Arranging replacements when schedules need to be revised - switching

b. Social

c. Projects
(1) Formulating "code for volunteer mothers."

(2) Enlisting community resources

(3) Organizing public program to present "volunteer mothers" to interested gropus

VIII. DIRECTION OF WORK, TECHNIQUES, AND DUTIES BEST SUITED TO VOLUNTEER MOTHERS.

A. ORIENTATION.

1. Objective is to familiarize mother with the library schedule, oriented to her own situation, and discuss any questions.

2. Introductory tour about library with group or individuals.
a. Reference collection pointed out with quick comparison to catalog card, showing Dewey decimal system.

b. Librarian talks informally, using occasional outstanding books to indicate relation of subject to classification number on back.

c. Order in library arrangement is shown by calling attention to neatness and position of books.

d. Magazines briefly examined and Reader's Guide explained

e. Card catalog, shelf list, vertical file, are shown and their use explained

f. Work room and various "library tools" introduced

3. Immediate group meeting for purpose of getting acquainted, learning general policies, and planning for organization of a volunteer club.

B. Duties:

1. Housekeeping
2. Circulating materials at desk
3. Preparing books and materials
4. Shelving and shelf reading
5. Mending books
6. Typing
7. Assisting in inventory
8. Filing
9. Splicing films
10. Simple maintenance of hardware
11. Assisting students using hardware
12. Distributing hardware and software
13. Reproducing materials

C. Public relations jobs.
   1. Liaison between library, students, faculty and community
   2. Preparing bulletin boards
   3. Typing bibliographies
   4. Arranging book displays and art exhibits

D. Manual for volunteers
   1. Must be designed to fit the needs of the individual school
   2. Gives in detail: directions, policies and methods used in performing duties
      a. Should be clearly written and easily understood, avoid technical jargon
      b. Should include "illustrations", examples of actual forms used, and possible catalog pictures identifying various pieces of equipment used to perform duties
   3. Should be introduced at orientation or later meeting either group or individual
   4. Copies distributed to individual mothers, and several retained in various places throughout the library

IX. POTENTIAL PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED.

A. Tendency of untrained volunteer to feel qualified in areas not designated
B. Weakens argument for additional professional paid assistance
C. Poor volunteer - poor student relationship
D. Lack of professional discretion concerning things learned about families and children - gossiping
E. Assignments are time consuming for volunteers who cannot work without your constant supervision and encouragement
F. Delicate situation where you must "release" a volunteer because she is no longer needed, or failed to conform to the standards set of the volunteer organization - even a personality clash
G. Possible problems for children of volunteer mothers attending same school:
   1. Student who informs his classmates that his mother is the librarian
   2. Student who becomes excited and/or assumes he is "special" when mother is present
   3. Favoritism displayed by volunteer to particular students
   4. Carrying tales home from school about neighbors' children.
H. Amount of time it takes to train and orient volunteers may hinder librarian from carrying out her expected duties

X. SUCCESS OF THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM IN JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, DEPENDENT ON THESE FACTORS:

A. Parents generally have less interest in school, and are less active
B. Much of the work can be done diligently by volunteer students from Business Education classes and Library Club Program

C. Lack of ability to maintain authority with older children

D. Curriculum demands are sometimes too challenging for non-professionals

E. Students do much of their library work independently, do not appeal for help

F. Adolescents lack appeal of younger children - rarely considered "cute"

G. Teachers do not integrate subject area skills with library instruction

XI. EVALUATING THE PROGRAM OF VOLUNTEER MOTHERS

A. The volunteer mothers are vital, stimulating, and necessary to the whole library program

B. A manual for the direction of duties is imperative

C. The library, through its volunteer mothers is able to offer improved service to the school, the faculty, and the pupils

D. The volunteer mothers are provided with a valuable and appreciated outlet for their interest and enthusiasm

E. The method for selecting the volunteer mothers should vary in each school according to policies and needs of the school

XII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THIS VALUABLE PRACTICE

A. That local groups of volunteer mothers organize themselves into regional associations to further their own growth, and the growth of the idea

B. Federal grants be continued so that Library Schools can conduct workshops and programs to popularize the value of volunteer mothers for school library programs

C. National Guidelines be adopted

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Volunteer mothers are a valuable source of help to the school, the students, and the librarian. By coming in contact with students, and being of service to the school, these mothers have an opportunity for self-development and enlightenment.

There are numerous routine duties which can be done by volunteer mothers, with guidance from the librarian. Library work is growing by leaps and bounds, and anything that can be efficiently done by volunteers gives that much more time for the librarian to devote to professional service.

The type of service depends much upon the type of help, hence the importance of selecting that help. Several methods or sources can be utilized. All plans have inherent disadvantages, the librarian will need to fit the method to her individual situation, and possibly use a combination of methods.

The volunteer parent will usually be interested and prove to be a superior worker. Group training of volunteers is generally impractical. Instruction should be given to one or two mothers at a time. This instruction should be followed by working at the task under the librarians guidance to insure retention of the procedure.

The librarian must fit volunteer help to her time and to the work in the library.

Librarians will probably find it most practical to have a written order of work for each parent. Explain a few duties each day and guide them in working them out. In this way the volunteer is constructively involved from the beginning.

Among numerous routine duties performed by mother volunteers are the following: clearing tables, straightening chairs, returning books to shelves, delivering books to teachers, getting the mail, stamping and putting new magazines in the magazine room arranged according to dates, filing back numbers of magazines, locating back issues of periodicals needed for reference work, checking certain sections of the shelves each day to see if they are in proper order, pasting packets, cutting pages of new books, typing book orders, filing cards.

Training volunteers is a responsibility not to be taken lightly. have a place for everything - a certain shelf for books which are in need of repair, for those to be numbered, as well as a place for unfinished work. Each mother should be trained to put her work and tools away so that others are able to locate them.

To some students, everyone working in a library is a librarian, and these students will ask privileges of mother volunteers. Teach volunteers to refer to you all requests for permission or questions requiring information only you can give.

A library cannot be efficiently administered with all volunteer help, any more than an office can be carried along efficiently by using all volunteer help. Volunteers can be of much service when they are well organized, well selected, well trained, and constantly guided.

Don't be afraid to show your appreciation for a job well done.

13 The Committee

APPENDIX A

Clerical jobs in the school library:

ACQUISITION AND MECHANICAL PREPARATION OF MATERIALS

- Checking request lists with card catalog
- Searching for simple trade bibliographic data
- Making order cards
- Typing orders to dealers
- Filing order cards & invoices
- Maintaining check lists of mags.
- Opening and collating new books
- Adding marks of ownership
- Typing cards and pockets for books and other materials
- Pasting pockets and slips
- Lettering, labeling
- Adding plastic covers
- Clipping and mounting materials for pamphlet file (not selecting)
- Preparing pamphlets for file

CATALOGING AND CLASSIFICATION

- Ordering printed cards
- Cataloging fiction
- Processing added copies and new editions
- Filing shelf list & catalog cards above rod
- Processing recataloged and reclassified books
- Completing info. on printed cards

CIRCULATION

- Assisting at charging desk
- Sorting and filing book cards
- Filling requests from teachers for A.V. materials and equip.
- Reserving books
- Issuing overdue notices
- Organize, circulate, and file magazines
- Counting and recording circulation statistics

ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

- Locating simple bibliographical information
- Typing subject bibliographies lists of new printed and A.V. materials for teachers

PHYSICAL UPKEEP OF MATERIAL

- Preparing books for binding
- Keeping bindery records
- Inspecting books returned from bindery

CARE OF SHELVES AND FILES

- Assist in shelving
- Supervising order and appearance of shelves and files
- Reading shelves and files
- Shifting books and other library materials
- ASSISTING WITH INVENTORY

MISCELLANEOUS

- Assist librarian in compilation of statistics and reports
- Assist librarian in making displays in and around the library
- Assist librarian in organizing a book fair

APPENDIX B

Application for Library Volunteers

NAME_____ DATE FILED:_____

ADDRESS:_____

PHONE:_____

CHILDREN ATTENDING SCHOOL: GRADE LEVEL:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: Check where applicable

High School Dipl.___ Academic___ Gen'l___ Bus.___ Other___

College Degree_____ Subject Area_____

WORK EXPERIENCE:

_____

_____

SPECIAL SKILLS:_____

HOBBIES:_____

AVAILABILITY: Days_____ Hours_____

REASON FOR WANTING TO BE A VOLUNTEER:_____

_____

This is only a suggested application form
and can easily be adapted to most situations.

APPENDIX J

OUTLINE OF MANUAL FOR VOLUNTEERS

I. CIRCULATION DESK ROUTINES

- A. LIBRARY RULES AND REGULATIONS
- B. WHAT IS DONE AT CIRCULATION DESK
  1. Charging
  2. Slipping
  3. Circulation records
  4. Setting date on stamps
  5. Renewals
- C. CHARGING OUT BOOKS - HOW IT IS DONE
- D. RESERVE MATERIALS
- E. CHARGING MATERIAL FROM VERTICAL FILE
- F. MAKING OUT OVERDUE LISTS AND SLIPS
- G. PREPARING THE CIRCULATION RECORD

II. PROCESSING AND REPAIRING

- A. CHECKING IN MAGAZINES
- B. PROCESSING OF MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS
- C. MECHANICAL WORK IN PROCESSING A BOOK - DEMCO BOOKLET

III. SHELVING AND SHELF READING

- A. HOW TO FIND A BOOK USING DEWEY
- B. HOW TO LOCATE A.V. MATERIALS
- C. SHELVING - FICTION
- D. SHELVING - NON FICTION
- E. SHELVING - A.V.

IV. ROOM SERVICES

- A. STRAIGHTENING
- B. ASSISTING WITH DISPLAYS
- C. KEEPING PERIODICALS AND NEWSPAPERS IN ORDER
- D. STRAIGHTENING CHAIRS, WATERING PLANTS
- E. CHECKING PERMITS

V. ARRANGEMENT OF CARDS IN CATALOG